

# Basic Partnered Conflict Process:

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**Setup: Agree on a date, length of time, and place to talk with no interruptions.**

## First Person:

**A. Talk & release.** First person talks without being interrupted. Use "I" statements about what you think, feel, and want. Describe the issue as completely as you can, talking about the facts of the event from your point of view, your feelings, and what you want. Stick to one issue and/or event at a time.

## Second Person:

**A. Listen deeply.** While the other person is speaking, listen with both your heart and your mind to what the person is saying. Listen for the facts and also use your heart to hear the emotion and feelings being expressed. Get beyond your judgement of his/her behavior, and put your own facts, feelings and solutions off to the side while the person is talking. Do not interrupt while the person is talking.

**B. Acknowledge what you heard** (without defending yourself). Tell the person what you heard them say about their experience of the conflicted situation. Reflect back both the facts you heard and your understanding of the emotions they were expressing. Only talk about what heard, not your opinion of what you heard.

**C. Ask the person if you got it all.** At this point the person can tell you things they did not hear you reflect back to them. Reflect back to them the additional things they tell you.

**D. Walk in the other's shoes for a moment.** Picture yourself being in the other persons shoes and having experienced what they are describing. Tell the other person how you would feel if you had the experience they are describing to you.

**E. State your own contribution to the conflict** (no more, no less). It may be hard, but own your contribution and state the truth; what behaviors contributed to the conflict? Get beyond "I didn't do anything."

***SWITCH ROLES AND REPEAT ABOVE.***

## Working Together:

### **A. Make agreements together:**

- A) Brainstorm and agree on a solution(s) to this issue. State the solution as a question beginning with, "How can we..."
- B) Brainstorm ways to reach the solution and choose/agree on what you both will do.
- C) Clarify and agree on what each of you could do to help your communication in the future.
- D) Talk about how this discussion has effected your relationship.
- E) Schedule more time for follow-up if necessary
- F) Thank each other.